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77. W.

PORTRAITS OF 19TH CENTURY CELEBRITIES

Photographs from the
Gernsheim Collection
London.

On Show at the County Museum, Warwick
from 15th July to 27th August, 1961.

'PORTRAITS OF 19TH CENTURY CELEBRITIES'

Photographs from the Gernsheim Collection.

INTRODUCTION.

As far as we know, this is the first exhibition devoted to photographic portraits of nineteenth-century celebrities that has ever been shown in an English museum. It is extraordinary that the recognition of the special qualities of photography in portraiture should come so late, and this fact needs stressing, for photography not only revolutionized painted portraiture in the nineteenth century, but has also largely superseded it in the twentieth.

For several hundred years portraits in oil had been the privilege of the aristocracy and the prosperous merchants, who commissioned leading artists. The less affluent patronised local talent or were satisfied with a miniature. Silhouettes, wax portraits, and physionotrace portraits, fashionable between about 1770 and 1830, had been poor substitutes, for these small expressionless profiles were mere phantoms of the sitter's personality. It is understandable, therefore, that in the field of portraiture photography filled an urgent need and found widespread application.

The first photographic portrait studio in Europe was opened by Richard Beard, the English patentee of the daguerreotype, on the roof of the Royal Polytechnic Institution, Regent Street, London, on 23rd March 1841. Within three months Antoine Claudet opened a rival establishment at the Royal Adelaide Gallery overlooking St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. For two decades Claudet was considered the most artistic photographer in England.

The realization that the photograph revealed the sitter with uncompromising truth, dispelling cherished illusions of youth and beauty, was unpalatable at first, especially to women. The demands of the sitter for a good likeness and at the same time a beautiful portrait were - and still are - usually incompatible. Fashionable miniature painters had encouraged their sitter's whims, and traded on deceit. Suspecting, perhaps, that Alfred Chalon had made her quite unrecognizable by excessive flattery, the young Queen Victoria

asked her court painter one day whether he were not afraid that photography would ruin his profession. Chalon's confident rejoinder: "Ah, non, Madame ! photographie can't flattère" was typical. Nevertheless, the heyday of miniature painting was over. To all except the incurably vain the intimacy of the actual image of life was photography's chief attraction. It was this quality that made Elizabeth Barrett write to her friend Miss Mitford in 1843: "It is not merely the likeness which is precious - but the association and the sense of nearness involved in the thing...the fact of the very shadow of the person lying there fixed for ever ! ...I would rather have such a memorial of one I dearly loved, than the noblest artist's work ever produced."

The best daguerreotypists took such splendid portraits that even the great Ingres avowed "It is to this exactitude that I would like to attain. It is admirable - but one must not say so !" Henceforth he had preliminary photographs taken of his sitters.

Contemporaneous with the daguerreotype were the wonderful Calotype portraits produced by David Octavius Hill and his collaborator Robert Adamson in Edinburgh. It is an interesting phenomenon that in the very infancy of the art, these two Scottish photographers reached the highest peak in portraiture of which the photographic medium is capable. The artistic spirit with which their Calotypes are imbued cannot fail to impress. Their portraits are powerful in characterisation, and have a grandeur reminiscent of the quality of Old Masters, which led Clarkson Stanfield to remark in 1845, "I would rather have a set of them than the finest Rembrandts I ever saw". Since then artists and critics, though refraining from such dramatic comparisons, have been no less sincere in their admiration.

The caricaturist's ability quickly to seize upon the essential characteristics of his sitter was an asset to Nadar and Carjat, the two great French photographers, in immortalizing the famous. Following the tradition of the daguerreotypists, their portraits taken in 'sixties and 'seventies are simple and realistic, yet far more forceful and striking in their intellectual power.

Julia Margaret Cameron deplored the shallowness and lack of individuality in the carte-de-visite portraits fashionable in the 'sixties. In these little portraits, the elaborate setting assumed

greater importance than the sitter. There was no attempt at characterisation, and no endeavour to record what Mrs. Cameron called "the greatness of the inner as well as the features of the outer man".This feeling became a resolve when at the age of forty-eight she took up photography, which for her became a "divine art". Working for her own satisfaction and not for a living, Mrs. Cameron could afford to go her own way, and became a pioneer in a new kind of portraiture - the close-up; and in these the personality of the great Victorians comes out forcefully. Mrs. Cameron had the real artist's gift of piercing through the outward structure to the soul of the individual. Although the impressiveness of her portraits may owe something to the personality of the sitter - and this remark applies generally to portraits of the famous - her large head studies have a boldness which is startling in its originality of conception. A comparison of her photographs with the paintings of the same sitters by leading English portrait painters of the time such as G.F. Watts and Sir John Millais is rewarding: the photographer scores in every case against the painter, and as Roger Fry remarked, "Mrs. Cameron's photographs bid fair to outlive most of the works of the artists who were her contemporaries." This applies equally to the work of other outstanding photographers, of the present as well as of the last century. It is impossible to refer individually to all the fine portrait photographers represented in this exhibition; our comments can only serve as an introduction to the subject. It is no exaggeration to say of the photographic portraits in this exhibition that they give a far truer and more intimate impression of those who left their mark on the last century than painted portraits do, particularly since the majority of these are only enlarged and coloured copies of photographs.

Van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo, "Ah, what portraits could be made from Nature with photography and with painting ! I always hope that we are still to have a fine revolution in portraiture." This revolution was already in progress, but not in the way Van Gogh hoped for. In the second half of the nineteenth century most portrait painters regarded photography as a formidable rival. In trying to combat its popular esteem, they decried its merits while at the same time making use of it. In order to achieve a true-to-life representation, it became the practice of many artists to obtain photographs of the sitter, to project the best on an enlarged scale on to a light-sensitive canvas, and paint over it. This method was first advocated in 1853. To what extent it came to be employed by Academy painters is indicated by the guarded admission of Sir William Blake Richmond, R.A.,

in 1893: "Photography may be used, and is, I am told, being largely used by portrait painters who, unless I have been wrongly informed, are beginning to photograph their sitters upon their canvasses and paint over".

Sargent received a thousand guineas for a commonplace group of officers when a one-guinea photograph would have been more apt for the purpose, as well as doing the job better. Glaring stupidities of this sort are not isolated instances, but we are no nearer the solution proposed by Roger Fry thirty-five years ago: "One day we may hope that the National Portrait Gallery may be deprived of so large a proportion of its grant, that it will turn to foster the art of photography, and will rely on its results for its records, instead of buying acres of canvas covered at great expense by fashionable practitioners in paint."

London, June, 1961

Helmut and Alison Gernsheim

The Records and Museum Committee of the Warwickshire County Council is most grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Helmut Gernsheim for allowing this exhibition to be shown at the County Museum.

CATALOGUE

Note. In order to attain a consistent visual effect, standardised enlargements have been made from original photographs in the Gernsheim Collection, and toned to the original colour.

1. Queen Alexandra when Princess of Wales.

2. Hans Andersen. 1805 - 1875. Danish writer of Fairy Tales. Photograph by Georg E. Hansen, Copenhagen 1874.

3. Matthew Arnold 1822 - 1888. Son of Dr. Arnold of Rugby School: poet and critic. e.g 'The Scholar Gipsy'. Photograph by Elliott & Fry, London c. 1885.

4. Charles Baudelaire 1821 - 1867. French poet. Photograph by Etienne Carjat, Paris c. 1862.

5. Aubrey Beardsley 1872 - 1898. Designer in black and white. Famous for his posters, caricatures and illustrations in the 'Yellow Book'. Photograph by Frederick Hollyer, London c. 1895.

6. Sarah Bernhardt (Henriette Rosine Bernard) 1844 - 1923. French. One of the greatest of tragic actresses. Photograph by Melandri, Paris 1876.

7. General Bosquet (Pierre Francois) 1810 - 1861. French Division commander in Crimean war; saved British Army at Inkerman. Created senator and Marshal of France 1856.

   Capt. Dampière French captain in Crimean War. Photograph by Roger Fenton, Crimean War 1855.

8. John Bright 1811 - 1889. Member of Parliament for Birmingham Leading member, with Cobden, of the Anti-Corn Law League and Apostle of Free Trade. Photograph by Elliott and Fry, London c. 1870.

9. Elizabeth Barrett Browning
1806 - 1861. Poetess. Invalid through spinal injury for many years. Married Robert Browning 1847. Photograph by an unknown daguerreotypist c. 1848.

10. Robert Browning
1812 - 1889. Poet. Photograph by Mrs. Myers, London 1889.

11. Isambard Kingdom Brunel
1806 - 1859. Famous engineer and son of famous engineer. Designed Clifton Suspension Bridge and constructed all the original tunnels, bridges and viaducts on G.W.R. Photograph by Robert Howlett, London, 1857.

12. Thomas Carlyle
1795 - 1881. Writer, Essayist and Historian. Photograph by Elliott and Fry, London, 1865.

13. Lewis Carrol
(Charles Lutwidge Dodgson) 1832 - 1898. Oxford Mathematics Don. Author of 'Alice in Wonderland'. Photograph by O.G. Rejlander, London, 1863.

14. G.K. Chesterton
1874 - 1936. Critic and author e.g. 'Father Brown' series. Convert to R.C. Photograph by Howard Coster, London 1928.

15. Richard Cobden
1804 - 1865. Member of Parliament. Apostle of Free Trade (See Bright) Photograph by unknown photographer 1861.

16. Joseph Conrad
(Teodor Jozef Konrad Korzeniowski) 1857 - 1924. Born in Ukraine of Polish parentage, later naturalised British. Sailor and novelist. Photograph by J. Craig Annan, Glasgow, 1923.

17. Camille Corot
(Jean Baptiste Camille) 1796 - 1875. French landscape painter. Photograph by Mulnier, Paris 1870.

18. L.J.M. Daguerre — (Louis Jacques Mandé) 1789 - 1851. French scene-painter. Inventor of 'daguerreotype' process, the predecessor of photography. Photograph by E. Thiessen 1844.

19. Charles Darwin F.R.S., — 1809 - 1882. Naturalist. Published 'Origin of the Species' in 1859. Photograph by Julia Margaret Cameron, Freshwater, I.O.W., 1869.

20. Alphonse Daudet — 1840 - 1897. French poet, novelist, dramatist e.g. 'Lettres de Mon Moulin'. Photograph by Etienne Carjat, Paris 1865.

21. The 14th Earl of Derby — 1826 - 1893. Statesman and Prime Minister. Photograph by J.E. Mayall, London 1861.

22. Charles Dickens — 1812 - 1870. Famous English novelist. Photograph by Herbert Watkins, London 1859.

23. Benjamin Disraeli — 1804 - 1881. Earl of Beaconsfield. Famous statesman and novelist. Photograph by W. & D. Downey, London 1873.

24. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle — 1859 - 1930. Novelist, detective story writer e.g. 'Sherlock Holmes' Served as doctor in South African War. Photograph by the London Stereoscopic Co., 1900.

25. Alexandre Dumas (père) — (Alexandre Dumas Davy de la Pailleterie) 1802 - 1868. French writer of historical drama e.g 'The Three Musketeers'. Photograph by Etienne Carjat, Paris 1865.

26. Anton Dvorak — (Antonin) 1841 - 1904. Czech composer. Director of National Conservatory of music in New York. Composed 'The New World Symphony'. Photograph by an unknown American photographer c. 1890.

27. Thomas A. Edison — 1847 - 1931. American inventor of duplex telegraphy. Developed electric light, phonograph and other inventions. Photograph by unknown American photographer 1887.

28. William Etty R.A., — 1787 - 1849. Artist. English figure painter. Photograph by David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson.

29. Gen. Sir George de Lacy Evans — 1787 - 1870. Irish. A brilliant soldier, served widely, including at Waterloo and in the Crimean War. Member of Parliament. Photograph by Robert Fenton during Crimean War, 1855.

30. Michael Faraday — 1791 - 1867. Chemist and natural philosopher. Made many discoveries relating to electricity. Publications included articles on the condensation of gases. Photograph by Maull & Polyblank, London 1856.

31. Sir Francis Galton F.R.S., — 1822 - 1911. Cousin of Charles Darwin. Scientist and traveller. Distinguished for his work on heredity and meteriology. Published 'Natural Inheritance'. Photograph by unknown photographer, London 1886. The family lived at Claverdon, Near Warwick.

32. Giuseppe Garibaldi — Born Nice 1807 (in the Kingdom of Savoy, then part of Italy) Died 1882. Italian Patriot, and the leader of the Italian Army of Liberation in the Risorgimento of 1860. Photograph by Negretti & Zambra, London 1864.

33. Charles Garnier — (Jean Louis Charles) 1825 - 1898, French architect; designed Paris Opera and Monte Carlo Casino. Photograph by Adam-Salomon, Paris 1865.

34. W.E. Gladstone — 1809 - 1898. Great Liberal Prime Minister Photograph by Maull & Polyblank, London 1859.

35. W.G. Grace — Born Bristol 1848. Died 1915. Famous cricketer. Started to play in first class matches in 1864 and had scored 100 centuries by 1895. Photograph by Herbert Barraud, London 1887.

36. Jacques Halevy — 1799 - 1862. French composer of opera e.g. 'La Juive' (1835). Photograph by Etienne Carjat, Paris 1862.

37. Thomas Hardy — 1840 - 1928. Dorset novelist e.g 'Tess of the D'urbervilles', and poet. Photograph by Frederick Hollyer, London, 1898.

38. Sir John Herschel — 1792 - 1871. Astronomer. Contributed to knowledge of photography and of the 'Milky Way'. First to apply 'positive' and 'negative' to photographic images. Photograph by Julia Margaret Cameron, Freshwater, 1867.

39. David Octavius Hill — 1802 - 1870. Scottish landscape painter and photographer. First to apply photography to portraiture, using calotype process. Photograph by Robert Adamson, Edinburgh 1843. Artistically the photography of David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson has probably never yet been surpassed.

40. Victor Hugo — (Victor-Marie) 1802 - 1885. French novelist and dramatist. e.g. 'Les Miserables'. Photograph by Etienne Carjat, Paris 1865.

41. Sir Henry Irving — (John Henry Broadribb) 1838 - 1905. Actor. Shared many triumphs with Ellen Terry. Famous as a Shakespearian actor. Photograph taken as Thomas à Beckett, by H.H.H. Cameron London, 1893.

42. The Rev. Charles Kingsley
1819 - 1875. Rector of Eversley (Hants). Novelist and Social Reformer. Author of 'The Water Babies'. Photograph by the London Stereoscopic Company c. 1862.

43. Franz Liszt
1811 - 1886. Hungarian composer. Photograph by J. Ganz, Brussels 1886.

44. Maxim Littré
1801 - 1881. French writer and doctor of medicine. Famous as a philologist.. Author of 'Dictionnaire de la Langue Francaise'. Photograph by Pierre Petit, Paris 1865.

45. David Livingstone
1813 - 1873. Missionary and explorer in Africa. Discovered Victoria Falls of the Zambesi. Photograph by Thomas Annan, Glasgow 1864.

46. Henry W. Longfellow
1807 - 1882. American poet: author of 'Hiawatha'. Photograph by Julia Margaret Cameron, Freshwater 1868.

47. Edouard Manet
1832 - 1883. French painter; became originator and leader of impressionism in painting. Photograph by Nadar, Paris 1870.

48. Alice Meynell
1850 - 1923. English poetess and essayist Photograph by E.O. Hoppé, London, 1908.

49. William Morris
1834 - 1896. Pre-Raphaelite artist, and poet. Founded in 1861 an establishment for the manufacture of wallpapers, and artistic household decorations and greatly influenced English taste in colour and design. Photograph by Sir Emery Walker, London 1889.

50. Mrs. William Morris — (Wife of William Morris - 49) Posed by D.G. Rossetti, London 1865.

51. Samuel Morse — 1791 - 1872. American inventor of magnetic telegraph. Invented Morse code. Photograph by an unknown daguerreotypist c. 1845.

52. James Nasmyth — 1808 - 1890. Inventor of the steam hammer and steam pile driver. Published 'Remarks on Tools and Machinery' Photograph by D.O Hill and R. Adamson, Edinburgh 1843 - 45.

53. John Henry, Cardinal Newman — 1801 - 1890. Hymn writer and poet. Anglican leader of the Oxford Movement. Convert to R.C. 1845. Created cardinal 1879. Photograph by Herbert Barraud, London 1887.

54. Florence Nightingale — 1820 - 1910. Famous for organizing the hospital service in Crimean War. Formed institution for training of nurses at St. Thomas' Hospital and King's College Hospital. First woman O.M. Photograph by an unknown photographer, London 1873.

55. Adelina Patti — 1843 - 1919. Italian (Sicilian) soprano. Naturalised British. Photograph by Horatio Nelson King, London 1865.

56. Cecil Rhodes — 1853 - 1902. British. Made a fortune in diamonds at Kimberley. Statesman and Prime Minister of Cape Colony after the Boer War. Ruling spirit in extension of British territory in S. Africa. Founder of Scholarship for colonials and foreigners at Oxford. Rhodesias named after him. Photograph by an unknown photographer 1889.

57. Gioachino Rossini — 1792 - 1868. Italian composer e.g. 'Barber of Seville'. Photograph by Etienne Carjat. Paris c. 1865.

58. John Ruskin — 1819 - 1900. Artist and writer on Art. Considerably influenced English taste in 19th century. Author of 'Stones of Venice'. Photograph by the London Stereoscopic Co., 1865.

D.G. Rossetti — 1828 - 1882. Poet. One of the founders of Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Photograph by the London Stereoscopic Co., 1865.

59. George Sand — nom de plume of Armandine (or Armantine) Lucille Aurora Dupin 'Baronne' Dudenant. 1804 - 1876. French. Author of romantic novels. She lived with Chopin and was one of the circle of artists poets, philosophers and politicians in mid-19th century Paris. Photograph by Nadar, Paris 1865.

60. George Bernard Shaw — 1856 - 1950. Irish. Journalist, critic, playwright. e.g. 'Pygmalion' 'St. Joan'. Photograph by W. & D. Downey, London 1892.

61. Walter Sickert — 1860 - 1942. English impressionist painter. Photograph by H. Walter Barnett, London, c. 1900.

62. The Archduchess Stephanie of Austria — Born c. 1865. Wife of Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria. Photograph by Alice Hughes, London 1905.

63. Robert Louis Stevenson — 1850 - 1894. Famous writer e.g. 'Treasure Island'. Photograph by A.G. Dew Smith, Cambridge 1885.

64. John Stevens R.S.A., — Photograph by D.O. Hill and R. Adamson, Edinburgh 1844.

65. Harriet Beecher Stowe — 1811 - 1896. American. Author of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'. Photograph by an unknown American daguerreotypist c. 1856.

66. Sir Joseph Wilson Swan — 1828 - 1914. English electro-chemist. Made important advances in dry plate photography. Shares with Edison honour of inventing incandescent electric lamp. Photograph by Elliott & Fry, London 1904.

67. W.H. Fox Talbot F.R.S., — 1800 - 1877. Member of Parliament. Photography as practised today is based on his negative/positive process which he published 6½ months before Daguerre's process was made public. Photograph by Moffat, Edinburgh 1864.

68. Sir Henry Taylor — 1800 - 1886. English poet. His autobiography contains pen portraits of famous poets and writers. Photograph by Julia Margaret Cameron. Freshwater 1867.

69. Alfred, Lord Tennyson — 1809 - 1892. Famous English Poet. Made Poet Laureate in 1850. Photograph by Julia Margaret Cameron, Freshwater 1869.

70. Dame Ellen Terry — 1848 - 1928. Famous actress (Mrs. James Carew - 1907) Born at Coventry. Acted with Henry Irving. Photograph by Julia Margaret Cameron, Freshwater 1869.

71. Anthony Trollope — 1815 - 1882. Novelist e.g. 'Barchester Towers'. A civil servant in the Post Office. Wrote in his spare time. Photograph by Lock & Whitfield, London 1877.

72. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec — 1864 - 1901. French painter and designer of posters and illustrations. Photograph by Maurice Guibert, Malromé 1896.

73. Mark Twain — (Samuel Longhorne Clemens) 1835 - 1910. American writer, lecturer, humorist e.g. 'Tom Sawyer'. Photograph by H. Walter Barnett, London 1900.

74. Giuseppe Verdi — 1813 - 1901. Italian composer of opera e.g. 'Aida' and also one requiem mass. Photograph by Mulnier, Paris 1870.

75. Jules Verne — 1828 - 1905. French. Author, notable for early science fiction e.g. '20,000 Leagues Under the Sea'. Photograph by Lock & Whitfield, London 1876.

76. George Frederick Watts — 1817 - 1904. Poet. Painter of the Pre-Raphaelite school. Photograph by H.H.H. Cameron, London 1892.

77. Sidney James Webb — Baron Passfield. 1859 - 1948. Socialist Member of Parliament and reformer. Founded 'New Statesman'. Together with wife, Beatrice, wrote The History of Trade-Unionism. Photograph by W. & D. Downey London 1892.

78. Oscar Wilde — 1854 - 1900. Writer, poet, dramatist e.g. 'Dorian Gray' 'Importance of Being Earnest' Photograph by W.& D. Downey, London, 1890.

ROYAL ARMOURIES LIBRARY

The following portraits, though not of celebrities, have been lent by the Gernsheim Collection on account of their high photographic quality. They were shown, with others in this exhibition, last May in the Salon du Portrait at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

79. Ambrotype of an old gentleman with sculpture c. 1853

80. Ambrotype of Mrs. William Blake, 1856.

81. Daguerreotype of a lady by William Telfer, c. 1848.

82. The Reverend Gilfillan and Dr. Samuel Brown by D.O. Hill & R. Adamson c. 1844.

83. Miss McCandlish by D.O. Hill & R. Adamson c. 1845.

84. Beatrice Henley by Lewis Carroll, 1862.

85. "It won't come smooth" (Irene Macdonald) by Lewis Carroll, 1863.

86. Marie Spartali by Julia Margaret Cameron, 1868.

87. Florence by Julia Margaret Cameron, 1872.

88. Daguerreotype of a gentleman, c. 1845.

89. Daguerreotype of a lady by Antoine Claudet, c. 1845.

90. Mrs. Saxton-Noble. Photograph by H. Walter Barnett, London, c. 1908.